



# The Bell Ringer



Montgomery Bell Academy

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Volume 57, Number 5

## ELECTION 2000

### The MBA Student Guide to the Presidential Election *Who Will Be Number 43?*

#### For Those Who Had Too Much Homework

*Bush-Gore Debates Tame, But Revealing*  
by Thompson Paine

First Debate(October 9, 2000):

As the debate kicked off both candidates were a little nervous. Gore's motions and words were not very fluid, and Bush's voice was a little weak. Gore also kept looking down from the camera at first, as if he were reciting something he had memorized.

Bush had a clever approach to the abortion issue which came up early. Instead of presenting himself as anti-abortion or discussing the ethics of abortion and identifying himself with that side of the issue, he simply said he would like to see abortion become a lot rarer in America, so as not to alienate the pro-life viewers outright. Gore caught Bush though in regard to his response to FDA approval of the abortion pill, and Bush looked really uncomfortable for the first time. Bush also began to stumble a bit when they discussed Supreme Court nominations.

Bush's weakest moments though were during discussions of foreign affairs. Gore made a point of

He looked very uncomfortable with the entire topic.

Bush also seemed a little



Al Gore and George W. Bush square off at Wake Forest on October 17

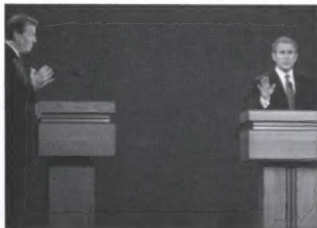
shaky in his responses to Gore's comments on the military.

While Bush became uncomfortable and stumbled a bit in his answers, Gore remained composed and articulate throughout the ninety-minute debate. About half way through, Gore seemed to gain confidence and Bush was losing it. Gore also seemed to answer the questions more directly, and his responses seemed less memorized.

Bush started sniffing a lot, and almost snickering under his breath as he talked, and even as Gore talked, making him seem uncomfortable and frustrated.

Gore did well drilling home the point about Bush's tax plan giving the greatest tax cut to the wealthiest 1% of America. Gore must have said the words "wealthiest 1%" at least seven or eight times. Bush's just kept countering it weakly by accusing Gore "fuzzy math" over and over. Gore also succeeded in not coming off as boring. He was using a lot of hand

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Here the two candidates battle it out in the first debate in Boston.

pronouncing "Milosevic" and "Kostunica" and showing off his knowledge of the situation in Yugoslavia. Bush mispronounced Milosevic twice, calling him simply "the man" twice as well,

**Correction:** The Service Club article in the last issue entitled "Service Club Takes On Numerous Projects" was written by Sumeet Vaikunth, not Andy Gray as was written. The Bell Ringer staff would like to apologize to Sumeet and anyone else upset by this mistake.

#### Government Club Takes Action on Election Day

On Tuesday, November 7, the MBA Government Club is putting on a mock election here on campus. In addition to being formally announced later this week, the returns will be forwarded to a city-wide high school mock election.

That night, the club is sponsoring an election party in the Roberts Room at 6:30p.m. There will be pizza and coke as everyone watches the results come in on TV.

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## Presidential Profiles

## George W. Bush

Republican Party

## Date of birth

July 6, 1946

## Place of Birth

New Haven, CT (grew up in Midland, TX)

## Spouse

Laura Welch Bush

## Children

Twin daughters Barbara and Jenna

## Higher Education

B.A. History Yale

MBA Harvard

## Military

Texas National Air Guard

## Interests/Hobbies

Fishing, jogging, baseball

## Business Background

Oil, Gas and Energy Business; managing general partner of Texas Rangers baseball franchise: 1989-1994

## Political Background

Governor of Texas: 1994-present

George W. Bush believes that his experience in the private sector combined with his impressive record as the Governor of Texas qualifies him to lead America into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He envisions a federal government that gives power back to the states and to the people.

Governor Bush plans for instituting enormous tax cuts, revamping the military, completely reorganizing social security, and giving money to poor families so that they can choose whether or not to stay in public school.

As governor of Texas, Bush showed a great capacity for bringing Democrats and Republicans together.

Bush also has a record that is unblemished by corruption or any other acts of weak character. He has shown that he has the moral strength and personal courage to lead this great country.

www.georgewbush.com

## Albert Gore, Jr.

Democratic Party

## Date of birth

March 31, 1948

## Place of Birth

Carthage, TN

## Spouse

Mary Elizabeth "Tipper" Gore

## Children

Kareena, Kristen, Sarah, and Albert III

## Higher Education

B.A. Government Harvard

Divinity and Law Schools Vanderbilt

## Military

U.S. Army Vietnam

## Business Background

journalist for The Tennessean in Nashville

## Political Background

U.S. House of Representatives 1976-1984 representing 4th district of Tennessee

U.S. Senate 1984 and re-elected in 1990 become the first candidate in history to win all 95 of Tennessee's counties U.S. 45th vice-president 1993-present

Al Gore has unceasingly served his country since the beginning of his professional life through the present.

After serving in Vietnam he returned home he came home and became a state representative for Tennessee, then U.S. Senator of his home state as well. Finally Gore was elected as the Vice-President of the United States, the office he has held for the past eight years.

Al Gore wants to become president in order to help America continue its Clinton/Gore economic prosperity, preserve social security, improve public school education, and continue the development of new energies while simultaneously ensuring that the Earth's environment will be clean for future generations to come.

Gore has shown he has a passion for civil service which he can carry into the presidency.

www.algore.com

## Ralph Nader

Green Party

## Date of Birth:

1934 Winstead, CT

## Place of Birth:

Winstead, CT

## Spouse:

none

## Children:

none

**Higher Education:** Princeton University (magna cum laude), Harvard Law School

## Military:

none

## Interests/Hobbies:

writing

**Non-political Career:** lawyer, writer for small-time news magazines

**Political Background:** Consultant to the US Department of Labor, unpaid advisor to Senate subcommittee on auto-safety

Ralph Nader has participated in public affairs almost his entire life. This year he is focusing on campaign finance reform as one of his main issues. He wants to end what he calls "legalized bribery." Nader also wants to make a number of reforms in the voting process such as same-day voter registration.

Nader also has serious concerns for the environment and would make those reforms a top priority as President.

www.votenader.com

## Pat Buchanan

Reform Party

## Date of Birth:

November 2, 1938

## Place of Birth:

Washington, D.C.

## Spouse:

Shelley Ann Buchanan

## Children:

none

**Higher Education:** Georgetown University, Masters from Columbia School of Journalism

## Military:

none

**Non-Political Career:** editorial writer for St. Louis Globe Democrat, numerous jobs as political analyst on television, founder and chair of "The American Cause," author of *Right From the Beginning*

**Political Background:** assistant to President Richard Nixon, White House COmmunications Director under President Ronald Reagan, ran for President 1992, 1996, 2000

Pat Buchanan supports a constitutional amendment to stop abortion. He is opposed to affirmative action, in favor of a balanced budget amendment, and opposed to any new gun control laws. In foreign policy Buchanan wants to end payments to poorer countries and avoid military involvement where American interests are not directly threatened. He also supports a flat tax and prolonged terms in the Senate and House of Representatives.

www.buchanan2000.com

## Harry Browne

Libertarian Party

## Date of Birth:

June 17, 1933

## Place of Birth:

New York, NY (grew up in Los Angeles, CA)

## Spouse:

Pamela Lanier Wolfe Browne

## Children:

Autumn

## Higher Education:

None

## Military:

None

## Interests/Hobbies:

classical music, opera, wine, sports, fiction

## Non-Political Career:

Investment Advisor (30 yrs), author of 11 books

## Political Background:

1996, 2000 Libertarian Party Presidential Nominee

Harry Browne has been a member of the Libertarian Party for many years and is very confident and knowledgeable in their beliefs. He would like to end the federal income tax, along with social security, welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, federally-funded education, and also the war on drugs.

Browne is presently living in Franklin, Tennessee.

www.harry browne.org

# Election Issue

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## Just How Far Does the Media Go?

by Mr. Alan Coverstone

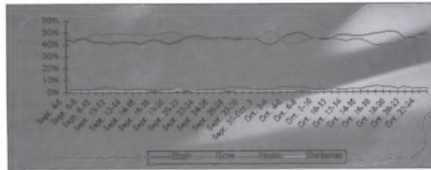
Our nation is obsessed with sports. We love nothing more than the game-winning hit in the bottom of the ninth, unless it is the last-second drive toward a Super Bowl championship. We appreciate strategy and momentum, and we love to live vicariously through those who are playing the games. As businesses, the nation's media outlets understand the power of sports metaphors to attract excitement and attention to the product they supply. What better way to attract attention to news during the political "season," than to offer daily updates on the "score."

The emergence of the tracking poll has given news organizations just the tool they need. Each day in the months leading up to an election, numerous outlets compile and release data that purports to show the percentages of the population that support each of the principle candidates in the campaign. The release of each day's "score" has transformed our elections from contests over clashing policy agendas into a "horse race" that the gambler in each of us loves to follow. In place of political issue discussions, we now find people across the nation arguing over who will win the race. The irony is that this vicarious daily tracking of the race has expanded at the very same time that voter turnout rates have declined. This phenomenon should not surprise us. When the Titans trail by five with a minute to go, very few of us feel like we should be on the field. We participate by sitting on the sideline and cheering harder. We make noise, but we never get into the game. Similarly, more and more Americans cheer harder for their candidate, but they no longer feel compelled to "get into the game" and vote.

The role of the media in politics is a difficult one to identify. From the 1960 presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon to the Monica Lewinsky scandal, most of what we know about politics and politicians comes to us through the media's lens. The power to shape the news we see is an incredible power. Our constitution places strict limits on the exercise of political power by the formal structures of our government. Yet, this same constitution offers its most stringent limitation on formal power in

order to ensure that the press operates without limits.

The media's formal declaration of its status as "watchdog" of American democracy was carried in the Washington Post. The Watergate Affair ushered in a new era of distrust for the government and a corresponding era of



This CNN daily tracking poll shows how many times the lead has changed.

trust in the media. By the mid-1970's journalists were celebrating their pro-democracy virtues and questioning those who would counsel responsible use of their newly found power. Yet, as the number of media outlets expanded, and the number of ownership companies declined, competition began to supercede concern. Each of the major media conglomerates now competes fiercely for the advertising dollars of sponsors that pay the bills. The tracking polls are a wonderful tool for these companies to deploy in their drive to attract consumers to their news.

Not only do tracking polls offer the illusion of a "score," they allow



President Nixon was one of the first U.S. Presidents seriously hurt by the media.

commentators to identify "momentum," "fumbles," and "home runs." Citizens wait with anticipation for each day's release of tracking data. A candidate must do more than offer a solid platform, he or she must match the opposition spectacle for spectacle. A failure to respond to a large media event will result in a "slump" in the polls. A candidate with sagging numbers is said to be at

risk of suffering a "knockout."

Coverage of the "horse race" has taught the media an important lesson. No one watches a blowout. Just ask the Monday Night Football crew how much they charge for ads during the fourth quarter of a Rams-Bengals game. Similarly, the news media has a vested interest in keeping the election close. As we near the end of a campaign widely regarded as "the closest in forty years," it is fair to ask whether the

media uses its power to shape our impressions of the candidates in order to keep the "race" close. In the process, Americans tune in to the news each day so they won't seem out of it around the water cooler at work. Yet on election day, voters will stay home in droves, waiting for the final score.

Consider these facts. Going into the Democratic National Convention, Al Gore trailed George W. Bush by 11-25 points in tracking polls. A blowout was on the horizon. Yet, as Gore's nomination acceptance speech approached, the story was his desperate need for a "home run." Did he hit it? Well, it was a good speech, but it broke little new ground on the issues, and it lacked the oratorical zeal of Reagan or Clinton. Still, almost immediately, the pundits began to trumpet the success of the speech. Polls began to roll in showing that a bare majority thought the speech was "strong." Within two days, the 15 point chasm in the tracking polls had been erased. The "race" was on.

As we approached the first Presidential debate, Gore's "lead" in the polls climbed. Just a week before the debate, Gore's "lead" was eleven points. Then as the debate neared, coverage of Gore's campaign changed subtly. Several minor "gaffes" were identified and Bush's contention that Clinton was manipulating public policy to support Gore began to be covered in the news. Was this the first time the Bush camp leveled this accusation? Absolutely not. In early October, coverage of this claim began to narrow the gap

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## Interest Groups?

by Trey Tally

One issue in many election years is what interest groups are most important. Are there any particular groups that are important to the election? Well, for this year, the answer is no. Though in earlier year interest groups have had some major force, such as in the 1994 congressional election when the NRA lobby was a powerful influence, this year no group has emerged. In 1994, the NRA successfully lobbied in many key



The National Rifle Association played a major role in recent elections

areas that strengthened the Republican presence in Congress. NRA lobbying efforts have been much less significant this year, however, barely affecting the campaign. The NRA is of course supporting Bush, but most of the NRA members are big fans of his anyway. It's not like the NRA vote was a toss up at any point this year.

Environmental lobbies are present and supporting Gore or Nader, but the split is mainly hurting Gore. The resulting split doesn't particularly come from an interest group as much as from the issues. Voters may be concerned about the environment, but they sure don't care who the World Wildlife Fund or Greenpeace is supporting.

Though the interest groups may play a significant part on the funding side of the campaign, their influence hasn't been to great on actual voting results. The main sticking points seem to be undecided voters in the big swing states, such as Florida and Michigan. However, the undecided are not exactly represented in an interest group. It's going to come down to the wire.



## Vice-Presidential Debate Unusually Friendly

by Ben Derry

To the best of my ability, I attempted to watch the Vice-Presidential Debate between Dick Cheney and Joseph Lieberman with a whole hearted desire to watch without my bias towards conservatism and the Republican candidate.

I believe my effort was successful, as I DEFENDED Lieberman against my parents on one point. Anyhow, the first notion I got from the debate was the different styles that entered the arena. While Lieberman acted reserved and dispassionate about the issues, Cheney spoke excitedly about the issues of abortion, readiness of the military, and tax reform. Another noticeable difference in the debating styles of the candidates was their direction towards or away from the camera. Lieberman's monotone voice and attitude made it more difficult for my concentration; however, my bias could have played a role in such ways. While Lieberman answered all questions directly into the camera, Cheney answered to the mediator, but addressed the camera with his closing remarks, making a great impression for the viewers at home.

While watching Lieberman, I picked up on a twitch that I found interesting to follow: for every 4 blinks of the eyes while not speaking, Lieberman would twitch his mouth muscles upwards in a kind of smile for a

split second. Now for the issues. One of the greatest arguments of the night



Cheney and Lieberman go head-to-head here on prime-time.

consisted over the readiness of the military. Lieberman spoke first, confirming that America was still "the finest fighting force the world has ever seen" and was "ready to go to war tomorrow if necessary." After personally watching the Senate committee on the subject last week, I knew this fact to be highly false. I believe that Lieberman was trying to soothe the uneducated American public by telling them everything was fine and dandy up in Washington and around the world. Cheney rebuffed Lieberman's assertion with facts about the actual readiness of the military, a subject which Cheney explained was of "specific importance to him." Cheney advocates a newer, better-funded

military to lead the country into the new age of war. Lieberman attempted to catch Cheney with another rebuff when he mentioned Gore's plan for increased spending in military over the next 8 years and specifically in the area of

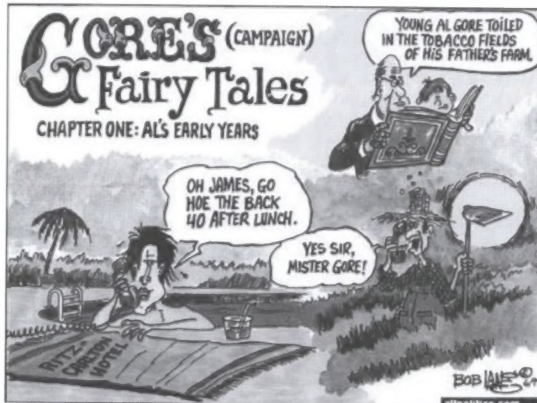
expanding current weapons technologies.

Cheney then followed with facts about the Clinton/Gore administration having to do with the decreased military spending and loss of millions of troops. In this point, I believe Cheney was victorious with the educated people, while Lieberman captured the uneducated by falsely

declaring the military's status as perfect. Another hot topic for the candidates was abortion. Cheney defended his view of pro-life, condemning the actions of the Clinton administration for allowing the continuation of abortion, specifically partial birth abortions. Lieberman confirmed the Democrat view of pro-choice, which was applauded by the female members of the audience.

Overall, both candidates presented their parties and running mates very clearly, while accurately displaying their own convictions for the job. There was no clear winner, but I believe Cheney used the old strategy that Kennedy used to defeat Nixon in the 1968 Presidential election: show your face, appear strong, and hope for the best. I believe he did this, and the polls reflected the same as Bush continues to separate from Gore.

## PROPAGANDA



www.gorefreetennessee.com

## PROPAGANDA W's Inadequacy

by Paul Begala

W, you're going to hate me when someone reads this to you. (I know you're not big on books yourself.) But you don't have what it takes to be president. Even your most loyal defenders say you're a few beans shy of a full burrito intellectually. And your whole career has been a case study in the art of failing upward. You were a poor student who somehow got into the finest schools. You were a National Guardsman who somehow disappeared from duty for a year. You were a failed businessman who somehow got rich. You were a minority investor who somehow was made managing partner of the Texas Rangers baseball team. And you were a defeated politician who somehow was made governor.

Let's face it, Dub: you were born on third base, and you think you hit a triple. You're lighter than my grandma's biscuits. You know it. I know it. And now the American people are going to know it.

The real record of George Walker Bush: a man who presents the thinnest, weakest, least impressive record in public life of any major party nominee for the presidency this century. A man who at every critical juncture has been propelled upward by the forces of wealth, privilege, status, and special interests who would use his family's name for their private gain.

(From Paul Begala's new book *Is Our Children Learning?*)



# Election Issue

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## Shady Media Tactics

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between the candidates. On the day of the first presidential debate, the race was declared by the polls to be in a "dead heat."

After the first debate, Gore enjoyed a brief "bump" in the polls, but the day of the vice-presidential debate saw the gap narrow to statistical irrelevance again. The Bush campaign then began to move "ahead" in the polls. In the week leading up to the second debate, coverage of Gore was quite negative, and the polls reacted to this coverage predictably. After the second debate, the media again mused aloud whether Al Gore could "recover" from his poor performance in time for the third debate. Intrigue sells advertising. In the third debate, most non-partisan pundits agrees that Gore "scored" a convincing victory. Still, the post-debate coverage was tempered, focusing instead on the "close race."

The old debate over the media's bias must now take a different direction. Yes, the media is biased. Numerous examples exist to illustrate the dramatic shifts in coverage during this campaign. Yet, no longer is the media biased toward liberal views. Does this mean they are now biased in favor of conservative candidates? Hardly. The media is biased in favor of its

stockholders. A close "game" sells higher-priced advertising than a blowout. The media has a vested interest in keeping the election close, and their coverage of the candidates shift to achieve that end. The media can now be said to be biased against the leader.

Who will win? As we "round the turn and head for home," look for the media to continue to cover each candidate in a way that keeps the "contest" close. As you listen to discussions of each sides' "strategy down the stretch," remember that, while politics is fun, it is not a game. We are not destined to sit on the sidelines "cheering on" our "team." We are supposed to be in the "game." After all, the polls are supposed to reflect what WE think. If Americans are to recapture control of its candidates, we must first recapture control of our own sense of political power. We can sit and hope for that last inning "grand slam," or we can get involved and work to shape the outcomes we desire. The media offers a valuable source of information for us to use in pursuit of these goals. Indeed, we could not keep track of modern candidates without it. Just remember that ours is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

## A Slightly Facetious Look at Political Ads

by Johnathon Mirian

What's in a sign? My friend Jose Lapanto would say, "Signs are for sissies. Blood, sweat, and the emitting of other bodily fluids are needed to show ones true patronage to a political movement. Rise comrade!...Rise and subdue those evil forces which..."

Nevertheless, signs are playing a major role in this year's election. Just go around town, and one will see signs for Bush, Gore, Nader, and Pippy the circus going cat (my neighbor's weird).

But, although these signs have played an integral part in the Nashvillian political scene, not one reporter has done an in-depth look at

of Nashville, and you'll see house after house with signs screaming the Bush/Cheney name as big as a Thanksgiving elephant hopped up on laxative. Also, according to Jesse Bull, Chris Bateman, Edward Buchanan, and Patrick Gibbs, these signs are fireproof. Apparently, the Bush camp knew that their political advertisements would come under heavy fire from raging bands of teenage hooligans. The size is not the only striking characteristic about the signs; these huge outdoor posters have Stalinistic lettering to show how conservative and straight laced these candidates really are. I mean come on, Cheney doesn't look like he's had fun since 1975 when he used to hang out with old "W" in a dark hallway in

Houston.

This is just pure speculation on my part, but I would say that behind their old American beliefs of increasing the number of ICBM's and cracking down on that evil devil known as the U.S.



One of the more clever and even humorous advertising ploys used by the Gore campaign

destruction beams with the refulgent glow of the sun all the more strongly...all the more inspiring when the political dogmas and philosophical tendencies converge with the candidate's own ethos concerning...uhh...international affairs in the realm of...uhh...a global, and for that matter...uhh...universal society, to produce a united message that says, "Hey, my name is Pippy the circus going cat, and I'm running for president...meooooow!"

I would first like to dissect the aesthetic qualities arising for the Bush/Cheney signs. This Republican ticket runs on the platform of Compassionate Conservatism (whatever that means), and the age old Republican war cry, "Smaller Government!" However, their belief that smaller is better does not show up in their signs. These things are huge! Just drive in the back foothills

government, Bush and Cheney are really attempting to institute a vast Communist dictatorship which will ultimately take over the whole Western Hemisphere and large parts of the Northern and Southern Poles...that's just speculation though.

Gore's modernistic portrayal of a lone farmer battling conservative right-wingers comes out in true form on his gut-wrenchingly beautiful political signs. These two foot by four foot signs mention Gore and Lieberman's name, but these components are put in their place. The names of Al and Joe are small in comparison to the universe presented on the sign. The futuristic swoosh on this political poster represents the forward looking perspective Gore and Lieberman hold for America and her happy children. The

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# The Bell Ringer

## Debate Wrap-Up: Gore a Little Stronger

Continued from p. 1

and face motions and seemed to be very comfortable and animated.

Toward the end, especially in talking about social security and spending issues, Bush regained his composure and the debate began to look a little more even.

I think that Gore won this debate because of his more substantive answers and remaining articulate and competent on almost every issue. Bush's verbal stumbling and inability to combat Gore's attacks on his tax plans other than the phrase "fuzzy math" left a weaker impression.

### Second Debate(10/12):

The second debate was the most boring of the three. Not until my clock read 8:50 did I find any true interest in what each candidate was saying. This tedious period was dominated by issues of foreign policy, in which, much to my surprise, Bush came across better than Gore. Bush was actually a little smoother in his delivery throughout these questions, suggesting he had worked on that aspect of his debating since the first encounter. Although Gore's answers had more substance, his

relentless "uh"s were distracting. Gore missed opportunities to disagree with and out-shine Bush on some of these questions. Gore was far too nice, and too agreeing.

The questions played a large part in the boredom of this segment. Lehrer asked questions which could really only be answered in one way or at least similarly. An example of this was Lehrer's question concerning racial profiling. Of course both the candidates will be for ending racial profiling, because they will come off as a racist if they do not. The questions could have definitely helped engineer a more interesting debate.

The first fault of Bush's, I thought, was his manner in addressing capital punishment. He smirked as he

asked Lehrer, "Guess what's gonna happen to them!" when talking about the murderers of James Bird. He simply did not approach the issue of death



Gore and Bush shake hands at the end of the third debate.

warmly or thoughtfully enough.

Bush seemed to avoid answering question on hate crime bill. It took Gore's asking Bush three times about the failure of a hate crime bill in Texas before he got anything resembling a straight answer.

Gore probably did not get his

first score of the night until the issue of health care came up. He pointed out three times that Texas was 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in children's health care and women's health care, and 50<sup>th</sup> in family health care. This was the first time Gore really pursued Bush and nailed him on an issue.

Bush got him back though on his answer to the last question in which he attacked Gore for embellishing stories and figures. He did so, too, without seeming frustrated or angry, which was a major improvement from the last debate. Gore then, on his last answer of the night, was forced to defend himself, as he admitted to and apologized such embellishment.

Although Bush did well in the area of gun control, too, and seemed to have been the clear winner of this debate, neither candidates were very impressive.

### Third Debate(10/17):

Finally...an interesting debate pretty much from start to finish.

In this debate, although issues

Continued on p. 7

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# Election Issue

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## Debates

Continued from p. 6

that have been worked over and over again in previous debates such as health care, education, and tax plans were discussed, the Missouri citizens participating in the town hall format brought some interesting questions to the table.

The first three questions concerned health care and these were immediately followed by a question of education, making it clear that these were probably the biggest issues to be addressed in this debate and in this election. But in discussing these first questions, Bush and Gore both set trends that would characterize the debate as a whole. These trends were Bush continued to paint a picture of his plans while remaining vague on specifics, and Gore drilled home his plans specifics and determination to show clear differences between himself and his Republican opponent. Instead of saying, "My plan does this or that," and saying by what specific means something will be accomplished as Gore did, Bush kept saying that he was for one thing or another, or there needs to be this or that, but never really committed himself to any decisions or spoke in detail about his plans. Among the questions that brought new issues to the debate discussions were those of censorship and morality in pop culture, the plights of small farmers, the keeping of promises, and affirmative action. On the issue of censorship in pop culture, they were both pretty boring, as were they on keeping promises. Gore proved to be very knowledgeable on the farming issue, which was a relatively random question, and had more substance in his answer than Bush. Gore also cleaned up on the issue of affirmative action, chasing Bush in to the into the rule-upholding arms of Jim Lehrer to protect him from Gore's pressing of a question Bush was afraid to answer.

In this debate, Gore did not, at least in my observations, avoid one single question. Although Bush claimed to have caught him doing so with the question of why people have so much skepticism toward the government, Gore, after being interrupted when trying to go back to the question, addressed it quite well in his closing statement. Bush, on the other hand, avoided admitting to his obvious opposition to affirmative action, and he avoided supporting or opposing the Dingle-Norwood Bill. When a 34-year-old, single woman asked how each candidate's tax plan would help her, Bush launched into his

philosophies on medicare, the military, and education.

Bush's speaking style, one that I think has been a strong-point for him earlier in the election, hurt him tonight. He pauses often after certain statements in order to make a point, which has worked well for him in speeches, simply because it usually invites applause, regardless of what was said. But when he paused after a statement holding little substance (or even blatant grammatical errors—of which Bush had several) it leaves the audience's minds trying to figure out exactly what he meant, rather than ringing with a powerful line.

One of the things that seems to have irritated people in the last two debates, which certainly bothered me last week, was the two candidates' agreeing on too many issues and their inability to distinguish themselves from one another.

Although Bush had more success with this in the last debate, Gore seemed to be on a mission to manifest every single disagreement between the two tonight. In a large portion of his answers, Gore began saying that he and Bush disagreed on the issue. Not only did this make Gore seem as though he had a great amount of confidence in his views, but it also put Bush on the defensive. But in most cases, not all, Gore showed that their differences were more those of approach and method, than in principle. Bush repeated that he and Gore had different philosophies altogether. This has been proven to be wrong though in the last two debates as they have shown that they broadly agree on multiple philosophies and principles.

One of the reasons Bush may focus on their having different philosophies though, is because philosophies are mainly the only thing Bush talks about in his speeches and in the debates. An example of this avoiding committing to decisions or policies and relying on philosophies held by the vast majority of Americans, was in his response to a question of gun control. Although Bush did say that he felt that the present laws were sufficient, this was the closest he came to a substantive answer. In his response, he said that he was for, among other obvious things, "a safe society." NO KIDDING!!! Does this imply that Gore is against a safe society, or that before we thought Bush was, but now he has clarified things? No. Statements such as these bear absolutely no substance, and although they worked well early in the race for Bush to project a compassionate image, the time has come to make commitments to plans and policies.

## Antiquated Laws

*These Tennessee laws, no matter how ridiculous they may seem, are still in the books.*

### State Laws

You can't shoot any game other than whales from a moving automobile.

It is illegal to use a lasso to catch fish.

### Local Laws

In Dyersburg, TN, it is illegal for a woman to call a man for a date.

In Lenoir City, TN, when you pull up to a stop sign you must fire a gun out the window to warn horse carriages that you are coming.

In Memphis it is illegal for frogs to croak after 11p.m.

In Oneida, TN, an ordinance forbids anyone from singing the song "It Ain't Goin' To Rain No Mo'."

Antiquated laws taken from [www.DUMBLAWS.com](http://www.DUMBLAWS.com)

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The staff of **The Bell Ringer** prepares all copy, headlines, and photographs at Montgomery Bell Academy. EverReady Printing in Nashville, Tennessee, prints the paper.

## Something To Keep in Mind

*Poverty is Still a Major Problem in America, whether the issue is acknowledged or not.*

by Daniel Branscome

America was a nation settled by cowboys. These cowboys were great homesteaders seeking their fortunes in the expansive wilderness of the pastoral frontier. And what did these pioneers believe? They cherished their individuality and they guarded their possessions with an undying vigilance. Truly, this same frontier outlook has been branded into the residual psyche of many Americans. Many seem compelled to defend their own without a thought for any other individual. Greed, it seems, is still very good. Gordon Gekko would be proud.

Yet, there is another America. A nation settled not by "Little House On the Prairie" look-alikes, but rather, by poor immigrant workers. Individuals whose sweat and blood linked the nations railways and bridged the country. And these new peoples brought with them a spirit of hard work coupled with the belief that everyone should be given a chance to succeed.

America remains divided.

There are those in America who believe that helping others is not an option. For some, personal wealth and success has blinded them to the problems of the rest of society. For others, this belief is merely a personification of their own inherent miserliness. They're corralling their wagons and damned if they let anyone else into their wondrous little circle of wealth and success. We have become pure accumulators, unconcerned with helping those less fortunate than ourselves. This situation is completely unwarranted and unjust in an age of prosperity such as ours.

The simple fact is that many still lack the chance to prosper. They lack opportunity. With schools failing and neighborhoods still filled with the terrors of gang violence, many in the inner city have no chance to advance themselves. It's all well and good to say that people should not live off of

## Harry Browne and Libertarian Party, Not To Be Scoffed At

by Chris Schuller

"Who?"

That is perhaps the most frequently asked question about Harry Browne of the Libertarian Party. Although he has received pitifully scarce attention in the Liberal-controlled media this season, Harry Browne is the best man for the job of President of the United States. Why? It's simple: Harry Browne does not have a Social Security rescue plan. He does not have a Welfare Reform plan. He does not have a plan to save education. Harry Browne is the man with a plan to reduce the size of our bloated government.

Both of the major party candidates are basically corporations and lobbyists running for president disguised as Al Gore and George. Also these two Democratic and Republican candidates have surprisingly similar social agendas: Take more of every American taxpayer's money and tell them what to do with it.

Harry Browne wants to end the federal income tax, and with it Social Security, Welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, Federally-funded education, and most of all, the war on drugs.

This man is not an extremist: He only favors personal responsibility over government handouts, local control over federal bureaucracy, and civil and constitutional rights over the "rights"



Here Browne rallies the crowd at a speech two weeks ago.

of the government.

Why is that so important? Because innocent people like that man in Lebanon, Tennessee, last month are killed every day in the "War on Drugs". This is also crucial because innocent Americans are deprived increasingly of their civil liberties as a result of our interventionist foreign policy. This foreign policy causes terrorist attacks like that on the U.S.S. Cole.

You may laugh in his face now; you may scoff and turn your back on the Libertarians, who "never have a chance of winning," but I promise you that the first time you sign off forty percent of your hard-earned income to the vast and faceless Federal Bureaucracy, you will feel differently.



Vice-presidential candidate Art Olivier is a loyal public servant.

government handouts. It would be nice if everyone could pull themselves up by their bootstraps. However, if there are no bootstraps, obviously, there is no way to achieve.

Nonetheless, if such poverty still exists, how can people stand by while so many still suffer? Most people are not completely uncaring and unconcerned with the plight of others. The answer is two-fold. First, economic prosperity breeds complacency. If a person and those they associate with succeed, then that person will grow ignorant of the fact that there are those who have not shared in the prosperity. Secondly and most significantly, people no longer have day-to-day contact with the urban poor. Before the mass exodus

of the middle class, the majority of Americans lived in or near areas inhabited by the poor. Even if they did not, they walked through or drove through the rows of tenements on their way to work downtown. They saw the conditions the poor lived in and saw the faces of the poor. This visual connection has been eliminated. We have successfully severed all economic use of the poor in our daily lives and are able to drive into downtown from the suburban fringe without even having to stop to see the lives of the poor.

Poverty has not been conquered. It exists in our urban areas, among our nation's elderly, within the ranks of the rural farmer, and among

many of our children. This situation is unacceptable. Now, in our most prosperous times, we have a chance to defeat it. Thus, this election season is a pivotal crossroads in our nation's history. We in America will either follow a path toward economic justice and equality, or our country will continue to solidify a system based on class distinctions and individual greed.

Ignoring these problems will only further imbed them into our societal structure. Those who have been blessed with prosperity must begin to truly embrace society's problems. To do otherwise would be to deny the tenants of our great nation.

Will we become a nation that strives for equality?



# Election Issue

9

## Ralph Nader: Is He a Serious Candidate

by William Kaminski

Ralph Nader was born in 1934 to Lebanese immigrants in Winsted, CT. Nader's interest in public affairs was sparked early. As a boy, he would hang around in the restaurant run by his father Nathra, and pay attention to the spirited debates, which took place daily among customers. As a teenager, Nader studied intensely and nurtured his political enthusiasm by reading Upton Sinclair and the other early Muckrakers, who first inspired his questioning of the distribution of power in American society.

Nader graduated *magna cum laude* from Princeton in 1955 and then from Harvard Law School in 1958. While at Harvard, Nader first explored the obscure topic of automobile safety. He avidly researched this subject and wrote articles for various news magazines, denouncing the automobile industry's tendency to focus on style and performance with little concern for safety, despite the 5 million reported accidents involving nearly 40,000 fatalities.

At 29, Nader decided to abandon his law practice in Hartford, CT, and set off for Washington, DC, to pursue a more aggressive role in consumer advocacy. He checked into the YMCA with only one suitcase and began his active involvement in politics by taking a job as a consultant to the US Department of Labor. Nader also remained a freelance writer for small-time news magazines and in addition

go before the Senate and admit to his wrongdoing. The case pushed a series of automobile safety laws that were passed in 1966 and altered the design of automobiles forever. With the money

Nader won in the settlement and the publicity he received for standing up to predatory corporations, Nader and a team of activists who assembled to work for public causes, dubbed "Nader's Raiders," launched a

number of organizations to push for laws, "to protect people as consumers, workers, and taxpayers, and the environment, to combat corporate abuse, and to increase citizen access to government," according to Nader's website.

Since 1965 Nader has been considered the most prominent leader in the US consumer protection movement. He has worked non-stop as a true public servant, using his considerable intelligence, training, and every available asset to improve and save the lives of millions. The results of his career leading up to the 2000 election are clear. Nader is responsible for more laws than either of the other major candidates had anything to do with. We have Ralph Nader to thank for the freedom of information act, the safe drinking water act, airbags, seat belts,

radiation controls on TV sets, the no smoking policy on airlines, the no overbooking policy on airlines, meat and poultry standards, and the list goes on.

Ralph Nader's passionate political involvement has naturally culminated in his current campaign as the Green Party

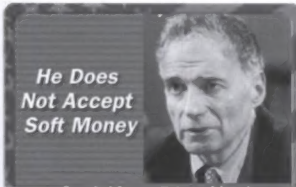
candidate in the Presidential Election 2000. Most voters do not take third party candidates seriously because they know that the candidate will not win the election, so they decide to "make their votes count." This is an issue I had trouble with myself, but Ralph Nader recently began the "Don't Waste Your Vote Tour," to fight a common misperception. He points out that a vote for the Green Party is not wasted if support mounts to a 5% showing for

the Nader/LaDuke ticket, for then the party qualifies for federal matching funds in the next election, as well as automatic ballot access in many states. A strong showing for the Green Party

of business dollars in parties or politicians only to receive tax cuts and corporate welfare worth billions in return. Nader proposes a system of publicly funded campaigning in which a voluntary \$200 check-off is added to the tax return. That \$200 would go to a public fund which any qualified candidate for federal office can tap into, and as a result be barred from receiving any private funding.

As far as the actual voting process goes, Nader wants to make a number of reforms including same-day voter registration in all states, so that those who begin following the election only a few weeks before still have a chance to cast their votes. Nader also proposed proportional representation in the elections as opposed to the winner-take-all system that we accept today. The most controversial issue, which has continually popped up in the news in the past few weeks, is that of open debates. Despite the fact that 64% of American voters would prefer a four-way debate, Ralph Nader was consistently denied by not only a

Continued on p. 10



Nader, like John McCain did in his fruitless race for the Republican nomination has made campaign finance reform a major issue.

became an unpaid advisor to a Senate subcommittee exploring federal involvement in auto safety.

In 1965, Nader targeted General Motors and the American automobile industry when he published his best-selling book titled, *Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-In Dangers of the American Automobile*. When GM moved to discredit Nader for his indictments, he sued them for invasion of privacy, which resulted in a landmark case that forced the president of GM to

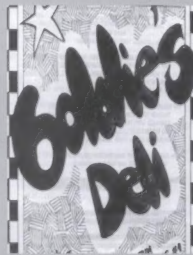


**Nader/LaDuke**  
[www.voteNader.org](http://www.voteNader.org)

ticket would also create a watchdog over the prominent parties, pressuring them to clean up their acts by providing an option in future elections.

In this election, one of Nader's primary platforms is campaign finance reform. He wants to bring an end to "legalized bribery," which is the process of huge corporations investing millions

Goldie's is a neighborhood deli specializing in a variety of Kosher meats, soups, and sandwiches. We make party trays and can cater any function. From knishes to knockwursts and pickles and pumperknickel, Goldie's Deli has something to take care of the biggest of appetites.



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## How Did You Vote? A Look At the Numbers

*In a recent poll done by the Bell Ringer, 409 students in grades 9-12, 89% of the high school, were asked who they thought would be the best President of the United States. Here is what they said...*

	Gore	Bush	other	"I don't care"	undecided
<b>Seniors</b>	34.1%	46.2%	2.2%	12.0%	5.5%
<b>Juniors</b>	22.2	37.4	18.2	19.2	3.0
<b>Sophomores</b>	20.5	38.5	18.8	19.6	2.6
<b>Freshmen</b>	23.5	35.3	19.6	18.6	3.0
<b>Totals</b>	24.7%	39.1%	15.2%	17.6%	3.4%

NOTE: Candidates receiving votes under the "other" category included Nader, Buchanan, Brown, Patrick Carnell, and Christopher Schuller

## Sign War Continued from p.5

stars on the sign show that in comparison to the celestial heavens above, the Gore/Lieberman ticket know that they are not perfect and do not belong in that Platonic sphere of perfection. Through modesty and brilliant meekness, Gore/Lieberman signs all across Nashville convey a message that tells voters, "Hey, I'm smarter than these two ego-centric buffoons I'm running against, but I'm not smarter than God." One day, I e-mailed the Gore camp and told them that their signs would go great with a new techno-poem I had made up. It had a really cool beat...like the one that makes your head start bobbing up and down

while you destroy a Bush/Cheney sign with the front of your jeep. They haven't e-mailed me back.

So, November 7 is fast approaching, and I would like to ask all eligible voters to vote on that all-important day. Make a well thought-out decision. Don't vote on the issues, that's so retro, vote on the basis of which sign really speaks to you. I would recommend that you get both presidential signs one weekend...lock yourself in your bedroom...and have a deep time of meditation and personal introspection. Only then will you know the true way of political paradise and the path to election nirvana.

**If You Are 18 Years of Age, GO VOTE!!!**

**Be a part of not only the political process, but also of history!**

## Nader Promotion

Continued from p. 9

chance to debate, but also his right to even enter the building in which the debates were held. On October 18th, the Commission on Presidential Debates in cooperation with local law enforcement blocked Nader's entry onto the Washington University campus where he was to be interviewed by our very own Gabriel Roth, while the debates were being held and gave a pathetic display of arbitrary and unlawful authority by failing to even give Nader legal grounds for his exclusion.

Along with his other reforms, Nader hopes to re-focus education from standardized testing to the practice of civic skills and democracy in grades K-12, declare equal rights and responsibilities for gay Americans, and decrease military spending. for our nation now has a "safety net" of over 6,000 deployed nuclear warheads, which is more than twice what all of our potential enemies spend combined. Nader wants to focus energy on preventive diplomacy and waging peace rather than preparing for war. He also indicted Bush with a Texas death penalty system sloppy with deficiencies from investigation to execution. He questioned how Bush can sign a single death warrant with a clear conscience while the impoverished citizens of Texas are slapped with pitifully incompetent defense attorneys, known to fall asleep

in the middle of hearings, and soon shuffled along to the electric chair.

To the other candidates, the word "passion" in relation to politics means furrowed eyebrows and maybe a clenched fist while shouting American Dream clichés at jaded reporters. Ralph Nader is an unmarried, 66 year old man who owns neither a car nor a television, who has formed little interest in anything outside his work. He is a man who has had the passion and endless courage to fight for the well being of every American citizen, republican and democrat, against seemingly impenetrable corporate control. Terms such as *activism* and *corporate abuse* have acquired such negative connotations today. The initial picture of an activist that forms in most people's minds is a hooded figure throwing a brick at a cop or burning an American Flag. Ralph Nader is an activist, in that when he notices cracks in our political system, he selflessly moves to fix them practically and safely. For those of you who are eligible, vote for the candidate who is the most qualified, vote for the candidate who believes what you believe, but do not throw your vote away on a corrupt two party system due to skewed media pressure, because by not voting for who you want to be president, you are only ensuring that the system will never change. Vote for Ralph Nader and make your vote count.